

NSC Briefing

Communism in Latin America

I. At Tenth Inter-American Conference, opening in Caracas on 1 March, one of main topics being pushed by the US is the "intervention of International Communism in the American Republics."

II. Much evidence of increasing international Communist interest in Latin America over past two years.

A. Increased activity by USSR and Satellite missions

1. Existing Orbit missions in Argentina, Uruguay,

Brazil, Ecuador, and Mexico continue active.

a. Representatives from some of these missions have recently presented their credentials in a number of other countries: Bolivia, Guatemala, Panama, Haiti, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador.

b. Argentine-USSR trade pact now operating and may provide stimulus for others.

(1) Brazil, for example, has renewed its pact with Czechoslovakia, is negotiating with Hungary, and is considering negotiations with USSR and Rumania.

2. ² No evidence, however, that Orbit missions support or direct the activity of local Communist parties.

B. Marked increase in Communist-subsidized travel of Latin Americans behind Iron Curtain.

1. In last six months of 1953, some 900 Latin Americans made such trips, many at Soviet expense.

a. These included roughly 220 Brazilians, 190 Chileans, 150 Argentines, 55 Mexicans, 50 Colombians,

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50 Cubans, 45 Guatemalans.

2. Increased Latin American representation very marked at two international Communist meetings in this period.

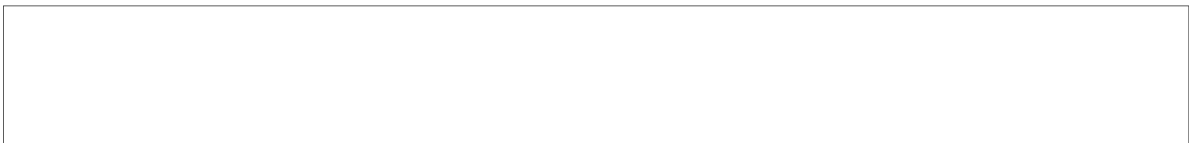
a. At the third WFTU Congress at Vienna in October there were 160 Latin American labor representatives present as compared to 21 at the second WFTU Congress at Milan in 1949.

b. At the Bucharest Youth Festival last August there were about 600 Latin Americans from 20 countries as compared to only 300 from 17 countries at the Berlin Festival in 1951.*

c. Latin American delegates also attended following front Conferences in Europe in 1953: Social Security; Transport Workers'; Rights of Youth; International Medical Congress; Women's International Democratic Confederation; World Peace Conference; World Federation of Teachers; World Federation of Democratic Youth; World Students' Congress. Many of delegates stayed on for training courses within the Orbit.

C. Training and indoctrination of Communist leaders and potential leaders has also been stepped up.

1. Top party leaders visiting Moscow in 1953 included:



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a. Dionisio Encina, secretary general of the Mexican Communist party, at the Lenin Institute in Moscow in late 1953.

b. Jose Fortuny, secretary general of the party in Guatemala also returned recently from Moscow.

c. Victor Gutierrez, secretary general of the Communist labor federation in Guatemala, paid a similar Moscow visit.

d. Victorio Codovilla, secretary general of the Argentine Communist party returned in 1953 from an extended tour of the Orbit.

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2. Extensive training was also given to a large number of lower level Communist leaders. e.g.:

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3. Within Latin America, the national Communist parties have put increased emphasis on training, e.g.:

a. In Guatemala the Jacobo Sanchez school was reactivated last February and recently "graduated" 31 "middle level" officials and 17 cell leaders.

b. At Sao Paulo in Brazil, the party has

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stepped up its indoctrination program within the past few months, one of the courses being designed for Communist sympathizers.

c. The Chilean party also started a training program last September.

III. Present Communist influence varies considerably from country to country in Latin America but only in the Dominican Republic and Haiti can it be termed negligible.

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A. In Guatemala, the Communists' influence over President Arbenz, their control of organized labor, and domination of the agrarian reform machinery allows them to heavily influence government policy.

1. Furthermore, their influence is still on the rise.

a. They showed increased voting strength in the January 1953 congressional elections and the December municipal elections.

b. Estimated party membership has grown in a year from 500 to 3000.

c. The opposition remains weak and divided.

B. In Brazil, Communist influence has grown markedly in the past year, as shown in two principal ways:

1. Estimated party membership rose from 60,000 early in 1953 to 110,000 in December.

2. The party strength in organized labor has grown particularly, largely because the opportunistic Labor

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Minister, Joao Goulart, who took office in June, has used Communist assistance in his effort to build up a personal political machine.

C. In Chile the party is increasing its influence in organized labor.

1. Primary cause spiralling inflation.

2. Primary vehicle is Chilean Workers Central, organized in early 1953. Communists do not control this, but use it to spread their views.

a. Communists do reportedly control unions in nitrate fields and coal mines, with an estimated membership of 24,000.

b. Communists have considerable minority following in copper workers federation with 25,000 estimated membership.

3. Press read by working man has many fellow-traveler staff members.

IV. Prospects for Action Against Communism at the Inter-American Conference.

A. The US-sponsored resolutions would seek to impose controls on international travel of Communists and on circulation of propaganda.

1. But most Latin American governments do not see Communism as an international threat connected with the Soviet Union.

2. In fact, some governments such as Peru and

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Venezuela use their Communists as tools against the non-Communist left.

B. Most Latin American governments have told the US they will vote for a resolution condemning Communism at the conference.

1. General interest in this resolution is less than in almost any of the other 27--including the one honoring the island where Colombus first set foot.

2. Economic items (development, trade, etc.) and colonialism in that order are uppermost in Latin American minds.

3. Some governments (Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador) want to talk about economic problems, as the economic basis of Communism, when the US raises the Communist problem. Others want to talk about the threat of colonialism or of right-wing dictatorships when Communism comes up.

C. Several governments (Argentina, Chile, Bolivia) are also worried that the discussion of Communism will appear to be "intervention" against Guatemala.

1. They have no love for Guatemala but will not condone "intervention" in any form.

2. They have been made much more sensitive on this issue by the charges publicized by Guatemala on 29 January strongly implying that the US would approve an armed attack by various other Latin American governments on the Arbenz regime.

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